



NORWALK-LIKE VIRUSES (Noroviruses)

What are NORWALK-LIKE VIRUSES (Noroviruses)?

Noroviruses are members of a group of viruses called caliciviruses, also known previously as “Norwalk-Like viruses.” Infection with norovirus affects the stomach and intestines, causing an illness called gastroenteritis. The virus was first identified in 1972 after an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness in Norwalk, Ohio.

How do people get noroviruses?

People get norovirus infections by swallowing food or water contaminated with feces from an infected person. Outbreaks of norovirus have occurred in restaurants, cruise ships, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, banquet halls, summer camps, and family dinners.

Who is at risk for norovirus infections?

Anyone can get norovirus infections. It is more common in adults and older children.

What are the known symptoms of noroviruses?

The symptoms of noroviruses are nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea accompanied by abdominal cramps. Some people complain of headache, fever, chills and muscle aches. Symptoms are usually brief and last only one or two days. However, during that brief period, people can feel very ill and vomit, often violently and without warning, many times a day. Symptoms usually begin 24 to 48 hours after ingestion of the virus, but can appear as early as 12 hours after exposure.

How are noroviruses diagnosed?

Norovirus can often be found in stool specimens of infected persons by using special tests. Diagnosis is often based on the combination of symptoms and the short time of illness.

What is the treatment of noroviruses?

No specific treatment is available. Severely dehydrated persons might need to receive intravenous fluids in the hospital.

How can norovirus infections be prevented?

- Wash hands with soap and warm water after toilet visits and before preparing or eating food.
- Cook all shellfish thoroughly before eating.
- Wash raw vegetables before eating.
- Dispose of sewage and soiled diapers in a sanitary manner.
- Food handlers with symptoms of Norwalk-like illness should not prepare or touch food.